



Franklin Township Community
School Corporation

MSD of Perry Township

Beech Grove City Schools

MSD of Decatur Township

RISE LEARNING CENTER Program description

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

Lifeskills classrooms at the Rise Learning Center (RLC) serve the educational needs of students who are pursuing a certificate of completion. These classes focus their curriculum on functional or "lifeskills" such as activities of daily living e.g. hygiene, or functional academics such as reading directions for a recipe or money skills. All skills are taught with a focus on the student being as independent as possible in all endeavors.

The Rise Learning Center has nine classrooms serving students with ASD or similar disabilities. Each classroom is led by a trained teacher with two or three Instructional Assistants in each classroom. Further assistance is offered by our support staff in speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and physical education. All support services staff has been trained in the use of the best practice techniques used to assist the students in their classwork.

The Rise Learning Center is employing evidence based practices in the education of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). We have received consultation and training from the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) on the correct implementation of structured teaching, communication strategies, and social skills building.

Our Lifeskills Classrooms are based on a model of first developing the appropriate environment for students with ASD and then implementing reinforcement and visual communication strategies; all techniques noted by the Autism Professional Development Center to be evidence based (<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/briefs>). One major emphasis of the structured teaching systems is increasing the independence of the students; this can be in communication, or in being able to complete tasks on their own without an adult prompting each step. We have developed extra classroom space solely devoted to the independent tasks for the students.

Our elementary classrooms are implementing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in their instruction in the form of the STAR (strategies for teaching based on autism research) program (<http://starautismsupport.com/>). STAR curriculum guides the classroom staff in increasing the student's skills, which they later practice for generalization in the independent work stations.

The middle school and high school classrooms follow the LINKS curriculum which outlines routine skills that are needed for greater functioning and independence. LINKS is supported by the STAR research (<http://starautismsupport.com/>). While all of the high school programs include community vocational experiences, we have one classroom of older, more verbal students whose educational day is geared towards work skills and work behavior skills.

The Lifeskills classrooms also implement Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (<http://www.pbis.org/>) a system of teaching and acknowledging appropriate classroom behaviors. We have instituted reinforcers, or rewards, into every classroom every day in a manner in which our students can understand and benefit.